



February 23, 2023

Senator Osten, Representative Walker, and members of the Appropriations Committee, my name is Mark Pooler, CEO for the Southington-Cheshire Community YMCAs. I am submitting comments regarding H.B. 6659, An Act Concerning the State Budget for the Biennium Ending June 30, 2025

The Governor's proposed budget increases the investment in childcare by 17%, the value of state support to programs had eroded by 25% since 2015. In addition, the minimum wage has increase by 64%.

Early educators are some of the lowest paid workers in the economy. The average wage for a childcare worker is \$14.97, and for a preschool teacher it's \$15.18. Self-employed family childcare providers typically work much longer hours and average less than \$8.50 per hour. I respectfully ask the state of Connecticut make a commitment to increase childcare workers' salaries.

Simply put, we need more child care support and so do the families of Connecticut. Connecticut's childcare system is teetering on the brink of collapse. Parents pay too much. Educators make too little. Many children are unable to thrive in thrive in the current system. We must transform childcare in Connecticut before it's too late.

Sincerely,

**Mark Pooler**  
**Chief Executive Officer**  
SOUTHINGTON-CHESHIRE COMMUNITY YMCAs

**Southington-Cheshire Community YMCAs**

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YMCA Mission: To put Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind and body for all.

Financial assistance available for qualifying individuals and families.

The YMCA is a not-for-profit 501c(3) organization.